
Judiciary Committee

SSB 6165

Title: An act relating to short-barreled rifles.

Brief Description: Concerning short-barreled rifles.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Law & Justice (originally sponsored by Senators Takko, Pearson, Sheldon and Benton).

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Expands authorized activities with respect to short-barreled rifles and their parts.
- Expands a current law exemption for persons who manufacture, repair, or test machine guns, short-barreled shotguns, or short-barreled rifles, to apply also to in-state sales.

Hearing Date: 2/23/16

Staff: Ellie Page (786-7291) and Edie Adams (786-7180).

Background:

The National Firearms Act (NFA) regulates the manufacture, transport, importation, and possession of certain firearms, including short-barreled rifles, destructive devices, and other weapons. A "short-barreled rifle" is defined as a rifle having a barrel, or barrels, of less than 16 inches in length, or a weapon made from a rifle if the modified rifle is less than 26 inches in length or has barrels of less than 16 inches in length. NFA firearms must be registered with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record (NFRTR), and only manufacturers, makers, importers, and certain governmental entities may register NFA firearms. A person who possesses a firearm registered in the NFRTR must have proof of registration that may be made available upon request of an ATF officer.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

To acquire or make a NFA firearm, an individual must meet certain requirements, including obtain prior approval from the ATF for the transfer or registration of the item, attain a certification from the local chief law enforcement officer, undergo a background check, and pay a \$200 tax. The ATF will not grant approval if the making or transfer of the weapon is in violation of any federal, state, or local law.

In Washington it is unlawful to manufacture, own, buy, sell, loan, furnish, assemble, repair, possess, or control a machine gun, a short-barreled shotgun, or a short-barreled rifle, and their parts. In 2014, however, Washington legalized a person's ability to possess, transport, acquire, and transfer a short-barreled rifle if done in compliance with federal law.

The law prohibiting certain activities with machine guns, short-barreled shotguns, and short-barreled rifles does not apply to persons in compliance with federal law who manufacture, repair, or test machine guns, short-barreled shotguns, or short-barreled rifles that are to be used or purchased by the armed forces or by law enforcement, or are for exportation.

Summary of Bill:

The statute governing short-barreled rifles is restructured and additional activities related to short-barreled rifles are authorized.

If in compliance with applicable federal law, it is not unlawful for a person to manufacture, own, assemble, or repair a short-barreled rifle. A person may also manufacture, own, buy, sell, loan, furnish, transport, assemble, or repair, or have in his or her possession or under his or her control, any part designed exclusively for use in a short-barreled rifle or used in converting a weapon into a short-barreled rifle.

The provisions making unlawful certain activities with machine guns, short-barreled shotguns, and short-barreled rifles do not apply to persons in compliance with federal law who manufacture, repair, or test machine guns, short-barreled shotguns, or short-barreled rifles that are for sale in state.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.